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Use God's bounties ethically

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The power-supply used to be plentiful in the Ivory Coast. The country had at one time been called the "Showcase of Africa", thanks to its glittering array of houses and shops.

In December 1983, everything suddenly changed. People were forced to eat by candlelight in luxury hotels, while houses and offices were lit by lanterns. Hydro-electric stations which had supplied 92% of the Ivory Coast's electricity were brought to a standstill by a severe drought which reduced the water flowing through the dams to a trickle. One commuter explained his situation to a *New York Times* correspondent: "For years I had gone from my air-conditioned villa to my air-conditioned car to my air-conditioned office. I never realised how hot it really is here."

This businessman, dwelling in air-conditioned surroundings in the heart of Africa, was living in an artificial world. When the electricity failed him, he realised that in reality, things were very different from what he had supposed.

The same is true, on a larger scale, of all mankind. Human beings consider themselves free in the present world. They think of everything they have as their own property. But when death comes, it will dawn on them, all of a sudden, that they had just been fooling themselves: they had been given freedom as a test whereas they had thought it was their right; they had taken what was God's to be their own; they were responsible to God for their actions, but lived under the mis-apprehension that, whatever they did, they would never be taken to task for it.

The right way for us is to realise that the world and its various bounties have been bestowed by God. We must utilise them properly and ethically. Our actions should be well thought out and carried out with a sense of accountability towards God.